



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CHAFEE BRINGS HOME \$800,000 FOR URI

AGRICULTURE PROJECTS

*Chafee Secures Funding for Tick Borne Disease Prevention and
Improvements in Biotechnology at URI*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As part of the comprehensive fiscal year 2006 Agriculture Appropriations bill, U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee has secured substantial funding for two University of Rhode Island (URI) projects. Chafee joined with Senator Jack Reed in requesting and securing funding for projects regarding environmental biotechnology and tick borne disease prevention. The appropriations bill passed the Senate on November 4, 2005, by a vote of 81-18, and is awaiting signature by the president.

“I worked to ensure sufficient funding for these programs because I feel strongly that the work being performed by URI will significantly improve the quality of life for Rhode Islanders,” Senator Chafee said.

As part of the measure, \$643,000 will be allocated for the URI Environmental Biotechnology Program. In Rhode Island, biotechnology offers the potential for enhanced production and economic gain for the agricultural industry, and provides researchers with the tools necessary to understand and control factors affecting human health. URI has invested previously allocated federal dollars to complete the first phase of its biotechnology initiative ahead of schedule. The funds will be used to purchase equipment to support the core laboratory facilities, enhancing research capabilities in plant biotechnology, aquaculture biotechnology, insect-borne disease, and microbial pathogenesis/bioterrorism.

“In recent years, biotechnology has revolutionized our capacity to improve the quality of human life. Funding for this project will ultimately result in vast production improvements, boosting the economic gains for the agricultural industry as a whole,” Senator Chafee added.

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In addition, the bill authorizes \$150,000 for another URI initiative, the URI Tick Borne Disease Prevention program. This important project is aimed at reducing the incidence of Lyme disease in human populations at serious risk. With previous federal assistance, the Tick Borne Disease Prevention program has made great progress in developing a municipal demonstration project using patented USDA/ARS tick control technology involving acaricide application to deer. Continued funding would allow the program to build on its previous research and develop new information-based, risk-appropriate disease prevention strategies. Aspects of the project include developing a much needed interactive web-based information system that identifies tick-borne disease risk by region. The program would also continue work on an outreach program emphasizing residential tick control education. This demonstration project would serve as a model for other high-risk municipalities nationwide.

“Over the past ten years, Rhode Island has consistently reported the second-highest incidence of Lyme disease in the nation. I requested funding for the Tick Borne Disease Prevention Program because it is imperative for us to reduce this number, and I will continue to effort until we have in place a disease prevention strategy which will educate, prevent and treat those at risk for Lyme disease.”

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